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ABSTRACT

As learning-disabled high-school graduates apply for and enter postsecondary schools in increasing numbers, college administrators and staff must make program changes and adjustments to accommodate these students. This literature review examines the state of the art of services being provided to learning-disabled students within junior colleges, colleges, and universities throughout the United States. The historical and legal basis upon which these services are predicated is discussed, and guidelines designed for use by schools of higher education are provided. Chapter titles are as follows: "Legal Imperative," "Program Development," "Current Program Models," "Developing an Admissions Policy," "Aiding the Prospective LD Student," and "Adjustment to the College Environment." Three appendixes include: (1) a graph of college freshmen enrollment statistics; (2) a guideline for postsecondary learning disabilities program; and (3) a list of Mid-Atlantic colleges with learning disabilities programs. (JDD)

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Developing an LD Program

A Guide for Colleges and Universities

Developing an LD Program:
A Guide for Colleges and Universities

by John P. Branson

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J.P.B.

FOREWORD

In basic education there has been a relatively quiet revolution in the last decade - the growth and acceptance of a large learning disabled student population. In 1986, 18.5% of the basic education student enrollment was officially classified as LD or learning disabled.

Many of these students are bright, creative, achievement oriented people who will seek the benefits of a college education. As LD students, they carry with them a mandate of special services and legal safeguards that assure their disabilities are treated and protect them from becoming victims of educational discrimination. The efforts of these students to gain admittance to college and to succeed academically will generate a new challenge for collegiate officials to provide supportive services or programs.

With the first wave of LD high school graduates applying for and entering postsecondary schools, it is imperative that college administrators and staff begin *now* to make program changes and adjustments to accommodate these students. Not only are such adjustments ethically and morally correct, they are legally mandated. Ultimately, these changes will be equally beneficial to the colleges and their students and further the development of human resources.

This guide outlines what must be done, and provides examples of services and programs that are currently used on college campuses. It is offered to assist college administrators and staff in their efforts to meet both the needs of their institutions and those of LD students.

John K. Baillie
Executive Director
Chester County Intermediate Unit

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INTRODUCTION

Statistics representing the number of disabled students enrolled as full time freshmen in the nation's colleges first appeared in the **American Freshman: National Norms** in 1978 (see Appendix A). In the short period since then, the number of freshmen reporting a learning disability has increased ten fold, claiming 14.3% of all disabilities cited. Thus, the number of learning disabled college freshmen is growing at a faster rate than any other disabled group (Heath, 1986a).

Improved identification procedures, more effective educational programming for learning disabled students at the elementary and secondary levels, and a "coming of age" of those students who have been the beneficiaries of the above, all have contributed to the growing number of LD students on the nation's campuses. A growing awareness on the part of institutions of higher learning as to the potential these students possess given the appropriate support services has also facilitated their acceptance (Heath, 1985-86b). While all of the above factors are responsible in part for the growing interest in postsecondary education on the part of learning disabled students, the catalyst which has made them possible has been legislation.

The following review of the literature examines the state of the art of services being provided to learning disabled students within junior colleges, colleges and universities throughout the United States. The historical and legal basis upon which these services are predicated is discussed, and guidelines designed for use by schools of higher education are provided.

J.P.B.

LEGAL IMPERATIVE 1

While many pieces of legislation have contributed to the current educational opportunities available to learning disabled students, two landmark Federal laws are largely responsible for breaking down the barriers of education.

Public Law 94-142

Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, mandates that every handicapped child receive a free public education in the least restrictive environment (Podemski, et.al, 1984). It requires public schools to develop procedures for identifying and assessing handicapped children in a nondiscriminatory manner and to develop an individual education plan (IEP) which will enable the handicapped student to achieve his or her full potential.

The provisions of PL 94-142 have enabled many learning disabled students to develop the academic background deemed necessary for postsecondary study, while instilling within them the same college aspirations of their nonlearning disabled peers (Mangrum II, and Strichart, 1984).

Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973

As PL 94-142 assures the right to an appropriate public education for handicapped school age children, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112) provides for handicapped students wishing to pursue postsecondary education.

Section 504 states: "*No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*"

Section 504 defines a qualified handicapped person as any person who meets the academic and technical standard requisite to admission or participation in an educational program or activity. Mangrum and Strichart (1984), citing Gutherie (1979), state that taken as a whole, Section 504 seems to consider a qualified handicapped person as anyone who, given reasonable program modification and auxiliary aids, can meet the academic requirements identified as essential by postsecondary schools.

The implications of the above law for institutions of higher learning are far reaching since, as Mangrum and Strichart (1984) point out, any college which accepts veteran's benefits, students with guaranteed student loans, or Basic and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, falls under its jurisdiction.

Section 504, Subpart E

Subpart E of Section 504 addresses the issues of admissions, recruitment and treatment after admission as they relate to the handicapped student in postsecondary school. Subpart E is paraphrased below.

Admissions

Admissions policies:

(1) may not place limitations on the number of handicapped students admitted.

(2) may not use any test or criterion for admission with a disproportionately adverse effect on handicapped persons or a class of handicapped persons, unless a validated predictor of success or a more appropriate measure is unavailable.

(3) must select and administer tests in such a way as to reflect the applicant's aptitude rather than handicap, must offer admissions test for handicapped students as often as for non-handicapped, must administer tests in facilities accessible to the handicapped.

Admissions (continued)

(4) may not make inquiries as to whether or not an applicant is handicapped, but may do so confidentially after admission. (Note: An exception to item 4 may be granted to schools attempting to take remedial steps towards compliance.)

Treatment:

(1) No qualified handicapped student may, on the basis of a handicap, be excluded from any academic, research, occupational training, housing, health insurance, counseling, financial aid, physical education, athletics, recreation, transportation, or other extracurricular postsecondary education program or activity.

(2) If a postsecondary institution considers participation by students in educational programs or activities not wholly run by the institution as part of, or equivalent to, a program or activity run by the institution, it must assure that equal opportunity exists for participation by qualified handicapped individuals.

(3) A postsecondary institution may not, on the basis of handicap, exclude a qualified handicapped student from any course, course of study, or any other part of its educational program of activity.

(4) Programs and activities must be operated in the most integrated setting possible.

Academic Adjustments:

(1) A postsecondary school must make such modifications to its academic requirements as to ensure that they do not discriminate against qualified handicapped persons on the basis of their handicap. This does not require modification of standards deemed essential to the program or required for licensure. Modifications may alter length of time for degree completion, substitution of specific courses, or adaptation of instructional methodology.

(2) Rules may not be imposed which limit a handicapped person's ability to complete a program study, i.e. banning tape recorders in the classroom.

(3) Schools must take steps to assure that students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills are not denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise discriminated against with regard to an educational program or activity due to the absence of educational auxilliary aids. These aids may include taped texts, interpreters, etc. Colleges are not required to provide aids for personal use, however.

Housing:

(1) Schools must provide comparable, convenient and accessible housing for qualified handicapped students. Appropriate housing must be made available in such quantity and scope as to afford the handicapped student an equivalent choice of accommodations.

Housing (continued)

(2) If a school assists another individual or agency in making housing available to its students, it must assure that the individual or agency does not discriminate in assigning housing.

Financial and Employment Assistance:

(1) Schools offering financial assistance to their students must not provide less assistance for handicapped students than they do for nonhandicapped, nor may they limit the eligibility of handicapped students. Schools may not assist any entity or organization which discriminates against handicapped individuals in the awarding of financial aid.

(2) Any institution which assists another person or agency in offering employment opportunities to its students must assure that such practices do not violate part 1.

(3) An institution which employs any of its students must do so in a manner which does not violate part 1.

Nonacademic Services:

(1) Qualified handicapped persons must have an equal opportunity to participate in all physical education and athletic activities as do their nonhandicapped peers. Separate or different physical education and athletic activities may be offered to qualified handicapped persons provided that no qualified handicapped student is denied the opportunity to compete on teams or to participate in courses that are not separate or different.

Nonacademic Services: (continued)

(2) A school which offers personal, academic, or vocational counseling must do so without discrimination on the basis of handicap. They may not counsel a qualified handicapped student towards more restrictive career goals than they would a nonhandicapped individual with similar interests and abilities. They may, however, provide factual information regarding licensing and certification requirements which may prove to be obstacles to the handicapped person.

Litigation

There has been little reported litigation regarding the rights of learning disabled students in postsecondary or collegiate settings to date. There have been many cases, however, dealing with the educational rights of individuals suffering from physical and sensory handicaps, which are protected by the provisions of Section 504. The following cases are cited *for initial research purposes only*. They do not represent a comprehensive summary of findings. Many of the cases cited are binding only in the circuit in which they were heard. It is hoped that the interested reader will use this brief introduction as a starting point in his exploration of the courts' interpretation of the responsibilities of institutions of higher learning to the handicapped.

The cases:

Barnes v. Converse College, 436 F. Supp. 635 '77

Jones v. Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services, 504 F. Supp. 1244 '81 and 689 F. 2d 724

Wright v. Columbia University, 520 F. Supp. 789 '81

Joshua R. Puskin v. Regents of University of Colorado, 504 F. Supp. 1292 '81 and 658 F. 2d 1372

Southeastern Community College v. Davis, 442 U.S. 397 '79

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT 2

While the increased interest and legal imperatives have certainly encouraged colleges and universities to accept learning disabled students, appropriate programs designed to meet their specific needs are still rather scarce (Putnam, 1984, Cordoni, 1982). Putnam (1984) identified four major reasons for the shortage of programs at the college level:

1) general costs,
2) perception that college is non essential,
3) traditional concern for academic excellence,
4) lack of awareness on part of college personnel of the need and incidence.

If the ever increasing number of learning disabled students enrolled in college or with plans for higher education in their future are to achieve their potential, a concerted effort must be made to develop programs which are affordable, effective, and do not compromise the academic integrity of the institution.

The initial step in developing a learning disability program is to identify one individual (Program Coordinator) who will assume the responsibility for its planning and implementation (Vogel, 1982). Since this person will ultimately direct the program, it is essential that he or she have a strong background in learning disabilities and a familiarity with the needs of LD adults in an academically demanding setting. The coordinator, in turn, will organize a planning committee comprised of individuals from various parts of the college community. The planning committee should include representatives of the major disciplines, the academic dean's office, a faculty member from the special education department, a representative from the counseling department, etc. The committee should reflect most areas of college life, but must be small enough to allow efficient action.

The planning committee's first task will be to familiarize themselves with the characteristic needs of learning disabled adults. The myriad of problems faced by learning disabled students within a college or other postsecondary institution are well chronicled (Heath, 1985-86b; Kroll, 1984; Cohen, 1984; Matusky and Losiewicz, 1981; Mangrum and Strichart, 1984; Vogel and Sattler, 1981; Goldberg, 1983).

While the effects of a learning disability may be felt in every aspect of school life, the specific pattern is highly individualized. A checklist of characteristics of learning disabled college students was developed by Mangrum and Strichart (1984). Characteristic weaknesses were divided into seven categories: cognitive, language, perceptual motor, academic, work/study habits, social and affective.

Typically, LD college students' verbal IQ scores are higher than their performance scores and particular difficulty is evidenced on the information and digit span subtests of the WAIS (Vogel, 1986). Memory deficits are common. Receptive and expressive language problems, affecting reading rate and comprehension, spelling, writing, speaking and listening, are perhaps the most frequently reported. Other characteristics of a learning disability often exhibited by the LD college student include: perceptual motor problems, disorganization of time and space, difficulty following directions, deficits in basic math skills, difficulty in relating to others, poor self-concept, etc.

This is merely a sampling of the many obstacles a learning disabled student must overcome in order to succeed at the postsecondary level. Yet, with a full understanding of the problems faced by the LD college student, appropriate support may be provided, and success is indeed possible.

CURRENT PROGRAM MODELS 3

Having acquired an understanding and sensitivity to the learning disabled student's needs, the planning committee must next select a means of delivering the appropriate support services. This is best accomplished by reviewing models currently in use throughout the nation.

Programs in colleges today tend to differ greatly from school to school (Johnston, 1984). Mick (1985), however, has identified six distinct models of service delivery to the learning disabled college student:

Tutorial Model

Tutors may range in expertise from college undergraduates (peer tutors) to Ph.D's. The cost involved in providing a tutorial program is determined by the background of the tutorial staff in addition to the cost of training and supervision. Vogel (1982) recommends the use of peer tutors or graduate students in the field of learning disabilities, since they often have firsthand knowledge of the course work and professors involved. She cautions, however, that it is essential that the tutor be trained to understand the nature of learning disabilities and be able to identify and work with a student's strengths and weaknesses.

A serious drawback to peer tutors, Vogel points out, is that they are often busy at the very time when the LD student needs them most, during finals. Myers (1985) suggests a more complex tutorial model where the tutor also serves as advocate. Testing is done to assure that prerequisite skills are mastered, and considerable practice and review is required of new skills and concepts. The tutor establishes instructional goals and objectives and teaches compensatory strategies. As this paradigm demonstrates, tutoring is often combined with other models.

Compensatory Strategies Model

The compensatory model makes use of strategies which allow the student to circumvent his or her disability. The number

of possible strategies is limitless, although the most common include books on tape, extended time for tests, reduced course load, etc. Kay (1980) offers an extensive list of strategies which may be used to compensate for a variety of learning problems, and suggests that students become experts on their learning disability so that they may take an active role in the selection of coping strategies. Wishing to provide support to learning disabled students on campus, but faced with limited finances, Walther, Nadeau, and Tucker (1985) describe a program implemented at the University of Utah in which resources already available through various offices and agencies within the university were pooled into a network of services for the LD students on campus.

The compensatory model is relatively inexpensive and can meet the needs of mildly learning disabled students who have developed a strong sense of independence. It is often used in combination with other services.

Adelphi Model

In addition to offering educational support, the Adelphi Model also concentrates on the student's personal/social development. Each student is assigned to a professional who acts as a liaison, while offering academic support. Students are required to attend one hour of personal and one hour of group counseling per week. This model offers the balance between academic and psychosocial needs for the LD student which Pierce and Pierce (1986) state is often missing in college programs. Obviously the cost of such a program will be significant due to the number of professionals involved.

HELDS Model

The Higher Education for Learning Disabled Students program was developed at Central Washington University. The HELDS model was designed to accomplish three major goals:

a) implement a comprehensive array of academic support services for learning disabled students.

b) heighten awareness throughout the college community as to the nature of learning disabilities and the individual student needs.

c) develop "course packages" which would include specific curriculum adjustments and suggested teaching methods to aid the LD student. College faculty would be involved in the creation of these (Lopez, Clyde-Snyder, 1983).

A unique feature of the HELDS program is its "Academic Protection" clause, which exempts students from being placed on academic probation or suspension for three semesters. This was instituted to reduce pressure on the LD students while they develop the skills or strategies necessary for success.

Linking or Bridging Model

Favored by Mick (1985), this model allows learning disabled students to sample courses at a nearby college or university during their junior and/or senior year in high school. It is designed to promote an appropriate attitude and aptitude for college study, as well as mobility and independence.

Special University Courses

Under this system, courses are designed specifically for learning disabled students. They may range from a few remedial courses offered in addition to the regular course of study to a complete program such as that offered at Lesley College through its Threshold Program. These courses are often non credit bearing and, as in the case of the Threshold program, may not lead to a degree.

In what would appear to be a strong argument for remediation, Seitz and Scheerer (1983) posit that important skills can be learned as an adult that were not learned as a child. A study conducted at Mt. San Antonio Community College in California found that learning disabled students made significant gains in reading and math grade level when given concentrated instruction in basic reading, writing, math, speaking, and study skills (Andrews and Gregorie, 1982). Another positive aspect of remediation not found in compensatory models is that as students acquire the basic skills being taught, the need for support diminishes (Vogel, 1982). While most colleges offer some remedial courses to all of their students, it should be noted that the courses discussed here are designed specifically for learning disabled students.

In comparing the remedial needs of learning disabled students to those of nonlearning disabled basic writers, Gregg (1983) found differences in learning styles and needs. Error patterns differred greatly. The basic writer often simply required practice manipulating sentence structure, already having the intrinsic understanding of its meaning; the LD students lacked this understanding. The basic writers could learn rules by rote memory, whereas the LD students required implicit learning through experience. Deficits exhibited by the basic writers could be traced to poor instruction or lack of experience, while those of the LD students reflected processing problems. Remediation is slow and many learning disabled students might find themselves in serious academic difficulty before any significant advancement is made. Washington (1981) suggests combining an alternative (compensatory) approach with remediation, thus meeting both the student's immediate and long term needs.

Alternative Models

While the six models above represent the major formats through which services are currently being provided to learning disabled students in higher education, other methods, often using aspects of those discussed, have proven effective as well.

Fisher and Page (1984) describe a program at the University of Colorado at Boulder where the emphasis is on transforming the student into an active learner using a diagnostic/prescriptive paradigm. Extensive diagnostic testing is performed with the results being shared and explained to the student. The students are trained to become experts on their disabilities, so that they can identify and communicate their needs effectively. They are also taught to analyze their work for errors and come to a better understanding of their deficits. The importance of a student taking an active role in identifying his or her needs and choosing appropriate coping strategies is supported throughout the literature (Gajar, Murphy, and Hunt, 1982; Kay, 1980).

Several programs target anxiety reduction as a primary goal, contending that a learning disabled student's fear of failure must be mitigated before academic goals can be attained. Decker, Polloway, and Decker (1985) suggest three strategies: counseling in study and organizational techniques, relaxation training, and the modification of inappropriate expectations. Relaxation therapy, as well as biofeedback have been found effective in promoting learning efficiency at Ventura College in California (Barsch, 1980). Miller, McKinley, and Ryan (1979) observed similar results while working with one undergraduate and two graduate students at Colorado State University. Orzek (1984) proposes the use of peer counseling groups to aid the learning disabled student to overcome personal and interpersonal difficulties. Groups are very structured with topics provided. Orzek suggests the use of Chickering's Vectors of development as a topic outline. Group members help each other academically, as well, by suggesting sympathetic professors, describing course requirements, and by role playing strategies for handling difficult situations such as approaching professors to request course modifications.

The planning committee must examine each model carefully and adapt it in such a way as to reflect the goals and philosophy of the institution. Careful consideration should be given to existent resources and means of coordinating and adjusting these to accommodate the learning style of the learning disabled student. Care should be exercised, however, not to simply "adopt" support services designed for academically deprived students, since these may not be appropriate for the student with a learning disability.

DEVELOPING AN ADMISSIONS POLICY 4

Perhaps the most difficult task faced by the planning committee is the formulation of a nondiscriminatory admissions policy for learning disabled students as mandated by Section 504. While SAT's, long the measure by which applicants were judged, are now offered in a variety of formats, including extended time and tests on tape, there is no empirical evidence of their validity in predicting college success among learning disabled students. Tests of this nature tend to highlight the student's disability rather than their potential (Pierce, 1986; Blanton, 1985; Strichart and Mangrum, 1985).

Identifying qualified learning disabled students requires a much more individualized approach than that used by most admissions committees in the larger colleges.

Strichart and Mangrum (1985) suggest four steps that a college should follow in determining the suitability of a learning disabled candidate for admission:

1) Use results of the WAIS-R to determine aptitude.

2) Examine subtest scores of SAT or ACT to assess applicant's knowledge.

3) Request letters from the applicant's high school subject area teachers.

4) Conduct a personal interview with the applicant.

Use of the WAIS-R as one criterion of admission has been reported by several colleges. Wright State requires a learning disabled candidate to achieve at the high average level for admissions (Bireley and Manley, 1980), while Penn State (Gajar, Murphy and Hunt, 1982) requires only average performance. Vogel (1986) cautions against using a minimum IQ score, verbal or performance, as a primary determinant for admission.

She states, however, that the use of "intra-individual" scatter on verbal subtests has been found to be of "critical importance" in predicting academic success, and that the pattern of performance subtests often predict a student's ability to handle residential life.

Fisher (1985) lists nine assessment components which she feels are essential in determining whether or not a given student is qualified for admission:

1) acquisition of high school transcript and achievement test data
2) statement as to the type of secondary program from which the student is graduating, noting special services or modifications
3) Documentation of the handicapping conditions
4) IEP or similar document
5) recommendations — LD specialist/guidance counselor, teacher in area of strength, teacher in area of weakness, employer
6) handwritten essay — student describes disability, compensatory strategies, personal experiences, and life goals
7) personal interview with admissions director, LD specialist, representatives of education and social services
8) demonstrated ability to handle long term assignments
9) test results — WAIS-R, SAT or ACT (possibly the worst measure), oral & receptive language assessment, IRI, auditory assessment

While the above information should allow the admissions panel to make an intelligent decision, it can only be used if applicants self-identify themselves as having a learning disability, since pre-admission inquiry is prohibited by Section 504. It is therefore essential that colleges indicate in all publications that alternative admissions procedures are available for learning disabled students.

Garnering Faculty Support

No matter how carefully planned a learning disabilities program is, it cannot be successfully implemented without the full support of the faculty (Fisher, 1985; Vogel and Sattler, 1981). Gaining this support is a crucial function of the planning committee, and one not easily accomplished, as demonstrated by a study conducted by Minner and Prater (1984).

The authors wrote vignettes describing two students. One depicted a student with good grades who participated in extracurricular activities, and had defined goals (positive vignette). The other described a student with poor grades, no extracurricular activities, and no defined goals (negative vignette). A learning disabled label was shifted from group to group and faculty members at three Midwestern universities without learning disability programs were asked to rank the students according to academic expectancy and their ability to work with the given student. The rank order was the same for both categories.

Faculty members felt that the highest level of academic achievement and the person with whom they could work most effectively was the positive student with no label. Next they ranked the negative student with no label. The positive LD student ranked third despite the fact that his description was identical to the first student, and the negative LD student came in last. Based on their results, the authors suggest staff development workshops or training programs to dispel stereotypes.

Walther, Nadeau, and Tucker (1985) propose five topics to be covered during faculty awareness training:

1) the legal rights and specific needs of LD students
2) strategies for adapting or modifying teaching strategies and assessment techniques
3) suggestions for curriculum adjustment
4) information concerning support services on campus designed to aid both the student and the instructor
5) follow-up support

The learning disabled students' intense fear of failure precipitated by traumatic experiences early in their education, often leads to an avoidance reaction which is easily mistaken for a motivational problem. Such an issue could be addressed through the inservice programs (Moss and Fox, 1980), and faculty members could be trained in techniques to help the student overcome his or her inhibitions.

While faculty inservice training must certainly be considered a major component of any learning disability program, group workshops may not be the most effective means of acquiring staff cooperation. At a recent dinner meeting held by the Chester County Chapter of the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, Dr. Joseph Rogan, Director of the Alternate Learners Project at College Misericordia in Dallas, Pennsylvania, related that such training sessions had little effect in gaining faculty collaboration based on his personal experience. Contact with individual professors by program staff, with assurances of assistance if needed, proved much more fruitful. Carefully matching students with professors disposed to adjusting teaching and testing style to accommodate individual learning needs can yield very favorable results. In this manner both the students and program can be quietly integrated into the college community. Professors who have had positive experiences with both the students and the program will undoubtedly relate their experiences to colleagues who may initially have been less receptive. A "Big Show" approach should be avoided at all cost, as this will only raise the anxiety level of professors who do not feel competent to deal with students experiencing learning problems.

No matter how great the effort, it is highly unlikely that any learning disability program will enjoy the whole-hearted endorsement of the entire college faculty. As it becomes apparent which instructors do not wish to adjust, however minimally, for the learning disabled student, the program director or academic counselor may steer students to other, more sympathetic professors.

Assessment Adjustment

The area of adaptation most likely to provoke faculty misunderstanding and resistance is that of assessment. It is essential that alternative testing

procedures be devised which afford the student a valid opportunity to demonstrate his or her knowledge, without compromising academic standards (Heath, 1985-86c). Procedures must be consistent to allow the learning disabled student an equal opportunity to succeed, without providing an unfair advantage.

Since a learning disability is essentially a hidden disability, the need for adapted assessment will not be immediately apparent. Given the learning disabled students' reluctance to call attention to themselves, instructors must develop procedures which encourage students in need of special testing arrangements to make their needs known early in the semester. Typical assessment adaptation required by LD students includes: alternate methods of recording answers, administration of tests individually in a separate setting, and tests on tape or given orally.

AIDING THE PROSPECTIVE LD STUDENT 5

Advertising the Program

Once the learning disability program is established, the greatest service that the college or university can provide to prospective students with learning disabilities is to let them know that the program exists. PL 93-112 expressly prohibits a school from inquiring at time of application as to whether an individual has a learning disability. This, coupled with the learning disabled student's natural reluctance to divulge this information, could result in many qualified men and women failing to take advantage of a fine program. The college or university should publicize the scope and format of services which it provides to learning disabled students in all of its promotional materials. Effective advertising will help attract the type of student for which the program was designed and avoid frustration and wasted time for both students and university personnel.

Responding to Inquiries

A particular individual, optimally the LD Program Director, should be designated to respond to inquiries from students, parents and guidance counselors concerning services provided via the learning disabilities program. Questions must be answered in a frank manner and care must be taken not to promise a service which cannot be provided on a regular basis. The Program Director or his/her designee should be prepared to provide the following information (Mangrum and Strichart, 1985):

- ☐ Is diagnostic testing used to develop an individual educational plan (IEP)?
- ☐ Is the program staff trained to work with learning disabled students?

- ☐ Does the program provide remediation in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics?
- ☐ Are tutors provided via the program?
- ☐ Are text books available on tape through the program?
- ☐ Are notetakers provided, or provisions made for the use of tape recorders in the classroom?
- ☐ Does the program provide for alternative testing procedures?
- ☐ Is individual and/or group counseling available via the program?

Additional areas of inquiry offered by HEATH (1985-86b, d) include:

- ☐ admission requirements and adaptations
- ☐ the number of LD students currently enrolled, their ages, and year in school
- ☐ the goals and objectives of the program
- ☐ cost of services
- ☐ availability and frequency of tutoring
- ☐ past accommodations made by faculty members for LD students
- ☐ duration of services
- ☐ courses unavailable to LD students (Note: Before identifying a course, careful consideration should be given to legal justification.)
- ☐ courses required for LD students (credit bearing or not?)
- ☐ LD students who have graduated, the fields they pursued, and follow-up data

Facilitating the Campus Visitation

Cooperation and planning on the part of the college or university can greatly aid the learning disabled student in determining if the school is an appropriate choice. This, in turn, can go a long way towards avoiding future problems.

The campus visitation should begin with a meeting of the prospective student, the parents, and the Learning Disability Program Director. At this time, the program can be described in detail and questions may be answered. This meeting, while not part of the admissions process, can give the Program Director an idea as to the suitability of the school's services in light of the student's desires and needs. The Director should make arrangements in advance for the prospective student to meet other learning disabled students currently enrolled.

The student visitor should be given the opportunity to observe the program in action, visit classes, and meet professors. If at all possible, the student should be invited to spend the night in a dorm and should be encouraged to attend a school sponsored social function, perhaps with some other students from the program. The visit should conclude with a final interview with the parents and prospective student, at which time questions may be answered and options discussed.

ADJUSTMENT TO THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT 6

On the Campus

Acceptance into college is the beginning of a great challenge for the learning disabled student. Even with support, the LD student must be prepared to spend more time on study and assignments than his or her nondisabled peers. Yet, with minor considerations on the part of the institution, the learning disabled student's college experience can be greatly simplified.

The learning disabled student may have considerable difficulty becoming oriented to the physical layout of the college campus (Seitz and Scheerer, 1983). The school may facilitate the student's acclimation by color coding buildings, posting signs conspicuously, or providing a "buddy" to help the new student during his first week or two. A summer orientation week just prior to the beginning of school can also be very effective.

Assistance may also be required in learning bookstore, cafeteria and parking procedures. LD students' fear of appearing dumb may instill within them a reluctance to ask questions and thus result in confusion and unnecessary anxiety. By simply providing assistance at the onset of the school year, many problems can be avoided.

In the Classroom

Through reasonable planning the college instructor can greatly enhance the LD student's learning in the classroom. Vogel and Satler (1981) offer an extensive list of suggestions, several of which are presented below:

- Make syllabus available four to six weeks prior to the course. This is extremely important if the student needs to have the books taped. It also affords the student an opportunity to begin his/her reading ahead of time.

- Present assignments and course content via multiple channels, i.e. orally as well as in writing. The use of multiple modality instruction enhances learning for everyone, but is essential for the learning disabled student. As Seitz and Scheerer (1983) recommend, "AMPLIFY THE MESSAGE."
- Allow alternatives to the written paper (taped paper or oral presentation).
- Use precise language; avoid double negatives.
- Provide outlines of lectures with space for student notes (Seitz and Scheerer, 1983).
- Provide test alternatives.
- Always provide time for student questions, both in class and privately during office hours.
- Provide study guides and review sessions.
- Begin all lessons with a review and overview.
- Instill a receptive atmosphere within the classroom designed to reduce anxiety (Seitz and Scheerer, 1983).

CONCLUSION

The success achieved by learning disabled students in secondary schools and colleges, even those without formal support programs, is proof that such individuals truly deserve and must be provided an appropriate educational opportunity. The rapidly growing number of LD students on college campuses today indicates an increasing desire among these individuals to exercise their educational rights; rights of which they are well aware. Advocacy groups, such as the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, after years of fighting for the rights of learning disabled children at the elementary and secondary level, are only now beginning to focus their attention on higher education. Experience gained over the last decade has rendered these groups highly organized and effective in assuring that the learning disabled child or adult receives every opportunity to which he/she is legally entitled. While there has been little litigation to date concerning the rights of learning disabled adults in higher education, the law is clear and it is safe to assume that violations will be challenged with increasing frequency as more learning disabled seek admission to institutions of higher learning.

Providing a systematic program of services need not prove financially or administratively debilitating. Program options range from multifaceted models involving remediation, compensatory strategies and psychosocial counseling to the provision of simple academic support with learning aids. Cost may be offset through grant money or a reasonable fee charged to the student. A cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation or other service agency may yield a network of resources which may be coordinated into a comprehensive support system.

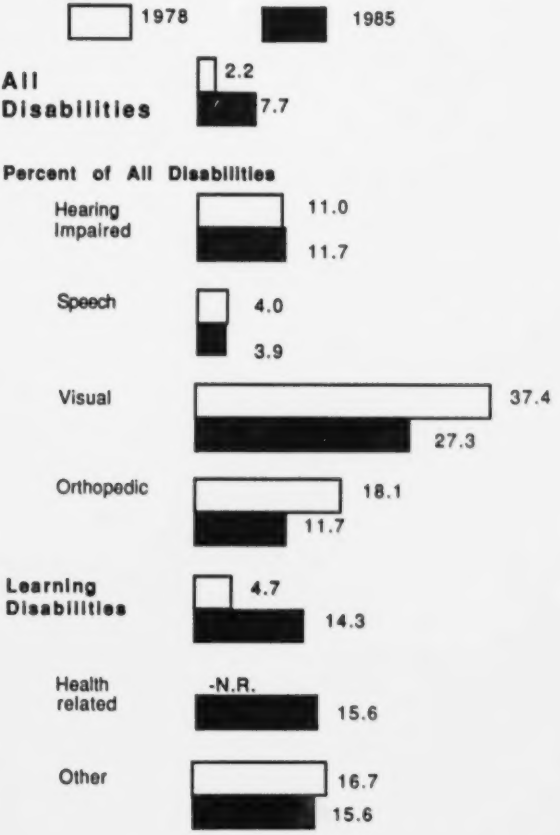
The decision to accept learning disabled students does not necessarily demand a huge investment, but it does require a sincere commitment. The provision of support in a haphazard or loosely structured manner can prove more of a hindrance than a help to the learning disabled student. While the more assertive and independent student may be able to

seek out the necessary services and coordinate them to meet his or her individual needs, it is unlikely that the typical learning disabled young adult will be able to do this with any proficiency. The result will be frustration and a reinforcement of the student's feeling of personal failure. It is essential that the support program, regardless of model, have a full-time coordinator with a strong background in the needs of learning disabled students.

Schools of higher learning have at their doorstep a new population whose unique experiences and perspectives may truly prove enriching to those around them. The LD college student has had to struggle against prejudice, self-doubt, misunderstanding, and inherent educational barriers his or her whole life. He/she has had to learn creative and often ingenious coping strategies to achieve his/her academic goals. Through working with learning disabled students we can learn a great deal about learning and intelligence. The young man or woman who can comprehend and discuss articulately advanced concepts in a given subject area, but who, when asked to write an essay on the same topic, is nearly incomprehensible due to illegible handwriting and the inability to spell even simple words, causes us to reexamine our expectations and preconceived notions of the nature of intelligence. The individual who reads at an interminably slow rate, with poor comprehension, yet is quick to learn new concepts when presented through lecture, film, or audio-visual aid, makes us reassess our teaching strategies, possibly encouraging greater creativity and flexibility. In order to succeed, the learning disabled student will have to apply himself or herself with a persistence well beyond the average student. Such dedication can prove a positive influence on others. Opening the doors of higher education to the learning disabled offers tremendous dividends, both to the student and the institution.

APPENDIX A

College Freshmen Enrollment Statistics



Statistical Reference: American Freshman: National Norms for the Fall of 1985 Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR POSTSECONDARY LEARNING DISABILITIES PROGRAMS

The following outline is offered as a guide for those charged with the responsibility of developing a program of support for the learning disabled student in a postsecondary school.

I. Key Personnel

A. Program Director

1. Minimum Masters level background in learning disabilities
2. Must be thoroughly familiar with Section 504 regulations
3. Responsible for formulation and training of planning team
4. Responsible for identification and coordination of services
5. Plans inservices or workshops on learning disabilities for college faculty
6. Hires and supervises tutors, counselors and other program staff
7. Works closely with Director of Admissions in assessing academic potential of LD applicants
8. Acts as liaison and advocate for LD students
9. Maintains close contact with social service agencies
10. Identifies potential funding sources
11. Monitors and evaluates program

B. Planning Committee

1. Representative from the Academic Dean's office, special education department, English and mathematics depart-

ments, counseling office, admissions, and other members of the college community as deemed appropriate

2. Becomes knowledgable as to the characteristic needs of LD college students
3. Identifies program goals and objectives
4. Investigates alternative program models
5. Develops program to meet goals and objectives
6. Assists in the development of nondiscriminatory admissions procedures
7. Plans faculty workshops to facilitate implementation

C. Program Staff

1. Program Coordinator (or Director)
2. Counselors — academic and personal
3. Tutors — trained to work with learning disabled students (may be graduate students)
4. Readers and notetakers (optional)
5. Remedial instructors (depending on program model)

II. Procedures

A. Appointment of Program Director

B. Formation of Planning Committee

C. Training of Planning Committee

1. General introduction to learning disabilities
2. Specific characteristics of learning disabled college students
3. Responsibilities of the college or university under mandates of Section 504

D. Formulation of goals and objectives

1. Compensatory support
2. Remediation
3. Comprehensive academic/psychosocial support

E. Investigation of existent programs

1. Literature search
2. Site visitations
3. Survey (mail or phone)

F. Program Development

1. Adapt or adopt program model to meet goals and objectives
2. Establish admission standards and means of assessment in compliance with Section 504
3. Identify resources available throughout college and community
4. Establish lines of communication with other service providers (academic support services, counseling center, BVR, etc.)
5. Hire program staff
   a. Tutors — graduate students and/or professional instructors
   b. Counselors — academic and personal
   c. Notetakers
   d. Readers
   e. Exam proctors — tutors may serve in this capacity

6. Train program staff
    a. Tutors should be trained as to special needs of learning disabled students
    b. Proctors must be trained in consistent testing procedures
7. Plan faculty workshops
    a. Introduction to the nature of learning disabilities
    b. Rights of learning disabled students under Section 504
    c. Needs and characteristics of the LD college student
    d. Methods of adapting teaching techniques to aid the learning disabled student
    e. Alternative assessment procedures
    f. Information concerning support services available to students and staff
    g. Follow-up
8. Establish criteria for program evaluation
9. Implement program
    a. Publish availability of program in bulletin and/or brochure
    b. Select students according to alternate admissions policy
10. Monitor and evaluate program

APPENDIX C

MID-ATLANTIC COLLEGES WITH LEARNING DISABILITY PROGRAMS

The following is a sampling of two and four year colleges in the greater mid-atlantic region which report having learning disability programs. The programs vary greatly and their appearance on this list should not be interpreted as an endorsement. The list is provided simply as a resource to aid in the exploration of existent programs.

Two Year Commuter Programs

Lehigh County Community College

Winnona Schappell
2370 Main Street
Schnecksville, Pennsylvania 18078

Acadademic Coordinator
for Handicapped Services
(215) 799-1156

Reading Area Community College

Diane Adams
10 S. 2nd Street
Reading, Pennsylvania 19603

Coordinator for
Counseling
& Academic Development
(215) 372-4721 Ex. 250

Two Year Residential Programs

Mitchell College

Joan M. McGuire, Ph.D.
437 Pequot Avenue
New London, Connecticut 06320

Director, Learning
Resource Center
(203) 443-2811 Ex. 284

Two Year Residential Programs (continued)

Elizabeth Seton College

Sandi Galst
1061 N. Broadway
Yonkers, New York 10701

Director
(915) 969-4000 Ex. 306

Harcum Junior College

Shelby Keiser
Morris and Montgomery Avenues
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania 19010

Director, Special Services
(215) 525-4100

PSU/Altoona Campus

Brenda Hameister
Boucke Bldg.
Altoona, Pennsylvania 16603

Coordinator of Disabled Students
(814) 946-4321

Four Year Colleges

Southern Connecticut State College

Barbara R. Owen
501 Crescent Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06515

LD Coordinator
(203) 397-4450

University of Connecticut

Dr. Stan Shaw
U-64, 249 Glenbrook Road
Storrs, Connecticut 06268

Director UPLD
(203) 486-4033

University of New Haven

Kathleen Altier
Freshman Residence Hall
West Haven, Connecticut 06515

Coordinator of DSS
(203) 932-7409

Columbia Union College

Betty Howard
7600 Flower Avenue
Takoma Park, Maryland 20912

Asstistant Dean, Academic
Support Program
(301) 270-9200

Frostburg State College

Beth Hoffman
113 Pullen Hall
Frostburg, Maryland 21532

Coordinator of Disabled
Student Services
(301) 689-4481

Western Maryland College

Dr. Melvin Palmer
Westminster, Maryland 21157

Dean of Academic Affairs
(800) 638-5005
(301) 848-7000

Boston University

Kip Opperman
19 Deerfield Street
Boston, Massachusetts 01830

Director
(617) 353-3658 (V or TDD)

Bradford College

Admissions Office
320 South Main Street
Bradford, Massachusetts 01830

(617) 372-7161

Clark University

Marilyn F. Engelman, Ph.D.
950 Main Street
Worchester, Massachusetts 01610

Associate Director
Academic Advising
(617) 793-7468

Four Year Colleges (continued)

Curry College

G. M. Webb — Director, Learning Center
Milton, Massachusetts 02186 — (617) 333-0500

Fitchburg State College

Dr. Therese Bushner — Assistant to Academic
160 Pearl Street — Vice President
Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420 — (617) 345-2151

Lesley College (Threshold Program)

Dr. Arlyn Roffman — Director
29 Everett Street — (617) 491-3739
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

Northeastern University

Dean Ruth K. Bork — Director
360 Huntington Ave., 04 E11 Bldg. — (617) 437-2675
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Dr. Py Silver — (413) 545-0222
166 Hills Street
Amherst, Massachusetts 01330

Ramapo College of New Jersey

Karen Kosenschein — Learning Disabilities
Mahwah, New Jersey 07430 — Specialist
(201) 529-7512

Adelphi University

Program for LD College Students
Eddy Hall, Box 701
Garden City, New York 11530

(516) 663-1006

CUNY/Queens College

Debbie Cohen
65-30 Kisseng Blvd.
Flushing, New York 11367

Counselor
(718) 520-7636

Columbia University

Irma Baez
204 Earl Hall
New York, New York 10027

Coordinator
(212) 280-3574

Long Island University/Brooklyn Cent.

Dr. Robert Nathanson
University Plaza
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Director,
Special Ed. Services
(718) 403-1044

Marist College

Diane C. Perreira
82 North Road
Poughkeepsi, New York 12601

Director of Special Services
(914) 471-3250 Ex. 274

Mercy College

Cameron Reid / Laura Browne
Yorktown / Yonkers Campuses
Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522

Admissions Counselors
(914) 245-6100
(914) 963-0372

New York University

Georgeann duChossois
566 LaGuardia Place #701
New York, New York 10012

Access to Learning (NYU)
(212) 598-3306

St. Lawrence University

Julius P. Mitchell
Canton, New York 13617

Director,
Opportunity Program
(315) 379-5580

St. Thomas Aquinas College

Dr. Warijanet Doonan
Route 340
Sparkill, New York 10976

Director,
LD Program
(914) 359-9500 Ex. 275

SUNY/at Albany

Nancy Belowich
1400 Washington Ave., CC137
Albany, New York 12222

Director
(518) 442-5491

SUNY/at Stony Brook

Monica Roth
133 Hum. Bldg.
Stony Brook, New York 11794

Coordinator
(516) 246-6051

Syracuse University

Mark L. Ende, Ph.D.
804 University Avenue
Syracuse, New York 13210

Director,
Academic Support Center
(315) 423-4498

College Misericordia

Dr. Joseph Rogan
Dallas, Pennsylvania 18612

Director of the Alternative Learners Project
(717) 675-4449

Immaculata College

Sr. Maria Claudia
Immaculata, Pennsylvania 19345

Director of Admissions
(215) 296-9067

Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania

Bruce Skolnick
G-6 Smith Hall
Lock Haven, Pennsylvania 17745

Director,
Special Services
(717) 893-2324

Mercyhurst College

Dr. Barbara Weisert
501 E. 38th Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16546

Director
LD Program
(814) 825-0446

PSU/University Park Campus

Brenda G. Hameister
105 Boucke Bldg.
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

Coordinator
(814) 863-1807

Philadelphia College of the Arts

Dr. Alvin Revell
Resource Center
Broad and Pine Streets
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

Director,
(215) 875-1110

Villa Maria College

Sister Joyce Lowrey, S.S.J.
2551 West Lake Road
Erie, Pennsylvania 16505

Director,
Learning Disabilities Program
(814) 838-1966

American University

Faith Leonard
MEC 201
Washington, D.C. 20016

Director of
Learning Services
(202) 885-3360

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